



COMMUNITY NEWS

District 1

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Epidemic Among Our Youth: Prescription Drug Abuse

According to the Arizona Affiliate of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America, kids are more likely to experiment with drugs due to boredom, spending time with friends who use drugs or too much unsupervised time throughout the summer months. In June and July alone, there was a startling 40 percent increase nationally in the number of youth who tried marijuana for the first time compared to the rest of the year. Even though we have gotten through those summer months, we still need to be diligent about the dangers affecting our kids.

Even more startling is the newest trend – intentional misuse of prescription medications, which is the biggest teen substance abuse challenge we face today. According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), abusing prescription and over-the-counter drugs can be just as dangerous, addictive and even deadly as using “street” drugs. The National Survey on Drug Use and Health (HSDUH) says, every day 2,500 teens abuse a prescription drug for the first time. The trend is alarming:

- The number of new abusers of Rx drugs is now greater than new users of marijuana (NSDUH, SAMSHA)
- Rx drugs are now the most commonly abused drugs among 12-13 year olds (NSDUH)
- Rx/OTC medications account for 7 of the 11 most frequently abused drugs (NIDA)

Aggravating the issue are weak perceptions of risk among both teens and their parents – both believe abusing medicine is NOT as dangerous as using “street” drugs.



From The Desk Of Commander Scott Popp

As the month of October quickly escapes us, the Holiday Season begins its descent. GAIN night was very successful, and it was great to see how many people showed up for their neighborhood parties. I want to personally thank the Neighborhood Watch Captains. It is the captains who drive the success of the program, and help us collectively keep our neighborhoods safe.

Speaking of neighborhood safety, October 18th through 24th is National Teen Driver Safety Week. The first six months after getting a license are the most dangerous times for any driver, and traffic accidents are the #1 cause of death for teens. What a great opportunity for all of us to set the example and “practice what we preach”. Please, always drive *with* caution, and *without* distractions when driving around our neighborhoods. This is especially important on Halloween when pedestrian traffic is increased.

Some Halloween safety tips: Have adult supervision present during the door-to-door activities. Research the activities you child may be attending, such as parties, school or mall functions. For children responsible enough to go without an adult, make sure you set a time that they should be home by, and impress upon them the importance of being home on time. Have them carry a cell phone. Advise them to hold off on consuming treats until they come home and they can be checked by a trusted adult. Have a Safe and Happy Halloween!

Commander Scott Popp

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Consider the ease of access to teens – medicines are readily available in their own or a friend's medicine cabinet. In addition, teens also abuse their own, a family member's or a friend's prescription. Medicine abuse has become "normalized" in teen culture. A fact more concerning is that *Arizona* twelfth grade students' abuse prescription medications at twice the national rate. The effects of prescription and over the counter drug use are not to be taken lightly:

- Seizures, Heart Attack, Stroke
- Permanent Brain Damage and Liver Damage
- Slow Breathing
- Small Pinpoint Pupils
- Dizziness
- Weakness
- Nausea, Vomiting, Seizures
- Death

The Arizona Affiliate of The Partnership for a Drug-Free America encourages parents and community members to take action by following these 3 steps:

- **Educate** themselves on the medications kids are abusing
- **Communicate** the risks of abusing medicine with the children
- **Safeguard** their medicine cabinets and ask family and friends to do the same

The Scottsdale Police Department and the Arizona Affiliate of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America are pleased to offer you the Rx360 program. Rx360 is a research-based community education program developed by the Partnership for a Drug-Free America to raise awareness of the problem of prescription drug abuse by middle and high school-age children.

"We are pleased to be partnering with the Arizona Affiliate for this important program," said Commander Burl Haenel. "Teens take their lives into their own hands when they intentionally abuse prescription medications - whether it's to get high or deal with stress, or if they mistakenly believe it will help them perform better in school or sports. Teens don't realize that when they abuse medication or use without a prescription, these medicines can be every bit as harmful as illegal street drugs. We have to educate our community on this issue."

A recent article from Join Together on September 8th, 2009 stated, "23 percent of teens say they can get marijuana within an hour and that prescription drugs

are easier to obtain than beer – findings echoed in stories from young drug users themselves." Each child faces pressure and how we work with them on handling that pressure is extremely important. If we as parents allow ourselves to become complacent or self-absorbed, we may miss the signs telling us that something is wrong. As adults, we may have the pressures of a divorce, a death in the family, work obligations, or even a marriage so let's ask ourselves; how is that affecting our children? Take the time to ask them about their day. If you notice any changes in mood, attitude, grades or feelings, ask them about it. Those minutes may be the most important of your life and theirs!

For more information on crime prevention or additional opportunities to get involved in YOUR community contact Crime Prevention Officer Jennifer Wattier at 480-312-0275, email jwattier@scottsdaleaz.gov, or District 1 Police Aide Sherry Cross at 480-312-2537, email: scross@scottsdaleaz.gov.

Upcoming Events

Support Special Olympics at Tip-A-Cop Events

Oct. 14: You are invited to come out and help the Scottsdale Police Department raise money for Special Olympics from 5 to 9 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 14 by having a nice dinner at either the Yard House Restaurant at Fashion Square.

Shredding, Prescription & Over the Counter

Drug Collection and More... Join us Saturday October 31st at the Sunflower Market (Miller and Camelback) from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Donations per box of shredding will benefit POSA's Annual Shop with a Cop in December. Contact Officer Craig Abernethy for more information about either of the listed events. (480) 312-2594 or cabernet@scottsdaleaz.gov.

Public Safety Community Contact Numbers and E-mail Links

- **Scottsdale Police Non-Emergency** 480-312-5000
- **Scottsdale Fire Department** 480-312-8000
- **SPD Drug Enforcement Hotline** - Suspected illegal activity, 480-312-TIPS (Hot lines are not monitored)
- **SPD Traffic Enforcement Hotline** - chronic traffic problems, 480-312-CARS
- **Code Enforcement** 480-312-2546
- **Child Safety Seat Installation** 480-312-BABY
- **CPR/First Aid Classes** 480-312-1817